

**Under federal and state laws**, the polling place for each precinct must be located in an “accessible facility” for elderly voters and voters with disabilities. Under federal law (**Help America Vote Act**), the polling place must meet detailed accessibility standards which can be found in this brochure. As a poll worker or elected official responsible for facilitating elections, you must understand the accessibility features of the equipment in your polling place in order to protect the rights of voters with disabilities.

The polling place must have facilities accessible to elderly voters and voters with disabilities in a way that provides these voters with the same opportunity for access, participation, privacy, and independence available to other voters. These include:

- Parking spaces marked and available for voters with disabilities as specified by state law.
- The path to the facility that an individual travels to reach the polls.
- The entrances to the facility.
- The paths of travel within the facility to the space where the voting systems are located.
- The space in the facility where the voting systems are located.

***No voter may be denied the right to vote because of any mental, physical or sensory limitation.***

*For more information concerning polling place accessibility, refer to the Indiana Election Handbook, found at [www.in.gov/sos/elections](http://www.in.gov/sos/elections)*

## **Guide to Poll Workers: Citizens with Disabilities at the Polls**

**Inspectors are required by state law to attend a training and educational meeting before election day. Your county may require other poll workers to attend. The county’s training and educational meeting must include information about making polling places and voting systems accessible to disabled voters and elderly voters.**

### **Assisting Voters with Disabilities**

- Be considerate of the extra time it might take for a person who is disabled or elderly to get things done.
- Speak directly to the person who has a disability rather than to a companion who may be accompanying the voter.
- Speak calmly, slowly and directly to a person with a hearing problem. If full understanding is doubtful, write a note to the person.
- Before pushing someone in a wheelchair, ask if you may do so.
- Greet a person who is visually impaired by letting the person know who and where you are. Provide a guiding device such as a ruler or a card for signing forms. When offering walking assistance, allow the person to take your arm and tell the person if you are approaching steps or an incline.
- Be aware that dogs (or other service animals) that assist people with disabilities must be admitted to all buildings.
- Be aware that federal law allows voters to be accompanied and receive assistance by another person in the voting booth, so long as that person is not the voter’s employer or union representative.
- No one may be denied the right to vote because of any mental or physical limitation or disability.

### **Suggesting Polling Places**

- If you are asked to suggest polling places for your precinct, suggest newer buildings since they are more likely to be accessible. If a polling place is not accessible, it may be possible to take temporary measures to make the polling place accessible on election day.
- Before suggesting a polling place for your precinct, seek input from people with disabilities, or local organizations that provide services to people with disabilities.
- Keep these accessibility guidelines in mind. Bring this brochure with you to the polling place to have this information handy.

**Thank you for your assistance to all Hoosier voters!**

## **Polling Place Accessibility in the State of Indiana**



**Our nation’s strength lies in the ability of all citizens to participate in the electoral process. Election officials and polling place officers can play a special role in helping Hoosiers with disabilities exercise their voting rights.**

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*This brochure is intended to provide general information about polling place accessibility in Indiana. Where your legal rights are involved, do not rely only on this brochure.*

## Selection of Polling Place

The county commissioners (except in Marion County) are responsible for designating “accessible facilities” as polling places for each precinct. (IC 3-11-8-3.1) If an accessible facility cannot be located within the precinct, the county may choose an accessible facility in a public building in an adjoining precinct in the same township, or if not, in an accessible facility within the same county. The county must publish a notice before each election, stating whether each polling place is accessible. If an accessible polling place cannot be located, the county must notify the Election Division.

## Parking

1. Each precinct needs to have at least one accessible parking space for people with disabilities. If a facility does not have permanent accessible parking spaces, you will need to designate at least one accessible space per precinct with proper signage.
2. The designated parking space should be located as near as possible to the entrance to the polls. (200 feet maximum)\*
3. Each designated parking space must be at least 13 feet wide with at least one space that is van accessible.
  - Parking space= 8 ft, aisle= 5 ft
  - Van accessible space= 8 ft, aisle= 8 ft
4. Parking spaces must be on firm, level ground, and on asphalt or pavement – free of loose gravel.
5. Parking spaces must be clearly designated by post-mounted signs bearing the symbol of accessibility and high enough to be seen when a vehicle is parked in the space.
6. There must also be a level passenger drop-off zone at least 4 feet wide by 20 feet long close to the path of travel.
7. Curbs connected to the parking space must be cut to allow direct access from a walkway to the building's entrance. A ramped curb may not have a slope of more than a 1 inch rise in 12 inches.

## Walkways or Pathways to the Building

1. At least one accessible walkway is required – if the route is not obvious, signs must be placed along the route to direct voters.
2. Walkways must not have unramped steps. The pitch of any slope or ramp may not be more than a 1 inch rise in 20 inches. If unavoidable, a suitable alternative such as a lift must be provided.
3. Stairs along the walkway must have non-slip surfaces and handrails.
4. Walkways and sidewalks must be at least 3 feet wide to accommodate wheelchairs and free of abrupt edges and overhanging objects lower than 80 inches.
5. The walkway should be free of any grating with openings of over 1/2 inch\* and breaks in surface above 1/4 inch in height.\*
6. The surface of walkways should be firm and stable– no loose gravel. (also free of snow, ice, leaves, debris)\*

## Ramps and Elevators

1. Ramps and elevators should be avoidable if at all possible.
2. When a ramp has a vertical rise of greater than 6 inches, railings are required.
3. Ramps and landing areas with drop-offs must have at least a 2 inch edge protection at the side to prevent slipping off the ramp.
4. If there is a door at the top of the ramp, a landing that measures at least 60 inches long and at least as wide as the ramp must be provided in order for a wheelchair to rest while the door is being opened.
5. If it is necessary to use an elevator in a polling place, it must meet requirements spelled out in the *American National Standards Safety Code*. (Call Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services for more details.)
6. Elevators should accommodate wheelchair turning space. (60 inch circle)\*

\* Recommended, but NOT REQUIRED for ADA compliance

7. Elevator controls must be clearly marked with raised lettering and Braille.
8. Floor buttons may be no higher than 54 inches for side approach and 48 inches for front approach.
9. The call button for the main floor entry must be designated by a raised star at the left of the floor designation.

## Other Features

1. Each polling place must have one accessible entrance.
2. Doors should have a minimum clear space of 32 inches. This requires a 34-inch or wider door.
3. Doors should be operable without movement requiring a closed fist. Automatic doors should stay open at least 3 seconds.
4. No rigid or hard objects may project in the path of travel.
5. Door thresholds must be no more than 1/2 inch high.

## Inside the Voting Area

1. Instructions for voting should be printed in at least 14-point type\* and prominently displayed.\*
2. The arrangement of the voting area must allow easy movement.
3. All necessary parts of the voting system can be no higher than 48 inches.
4. Tops of tables and counters must be between 28 and 34 inches high.
5. The writing shelf at voting booths or tables must have a clearance at least 27 inches underneath.
6. Voting booths or tables must be at least 19 inches deep.
7. Magnifying devices should be available for those who request them.\*
8. A well-lit area should be present where votes are cast.\*
9. Seating should be available for voters waiting their turn to vote.\*